



## Colorectal Cancer and Tobacco Use Fact Sheet

The single most important thing that you can do for your health and the health of others is to quit using tobacco.

American Cancer Society researchers have linked cigarette smoking or any form of tobacco use to more than 17 different types of cancer including colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States after lung cancer. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men (after prostate cancer and lung cancer) and in women (after breast cancer and lung cancer).

Tobacco use has also been proven to increase your incidence of colorectal polyps by two-to-three fold. Not only does tobacco use increase your risk of developing colorectal cancer; but also a 30 to 40 percent increase that you will die from colon cancer if you smoke. Your risk for developing colon cancer increases proportionately with the number of years and amount of tobacco you use. As soon as you quit tobacco use, your risk of colon cancer starts to decrease.

### Colorectal cancer risk factors:

- Men and women especially those 50 years of age and older
- African American men and women are at greater risk than other racial/ethnic groups
- Family history of colorectal cancer or benign colorectal polyps
- Use of cigarettes or other tobacco products
- Physical inactivity
- Diet

### Colorectal cancer symptoms:

- A change in bowel habits lasting for more than a few days
- A feeling that you need to have a bowel movement that doesn't go away
- Bleeding from the rectum or blood in the stool
- Cramping or gnawing stomach pain
- Decreased appetite
- Weakness and fatigue
- Jaundice

If you are at average risk for colorectal cancer, start having regular screenings at age 50. If you are at greater risk, you may need to begin regular screenings at an earlier age. The best time to get screened is before any symptoms appear.

### Quitting tobacco is tough:

- Many ex-smokers try three or more times to quit before they succeed.
- The small amount of nicotine in patches and gum is not harmful. Ask your doctor to suggest the best quitting aid for you.
- Call **Quit Now Kentucky** at 1-800-Quit Now (1-800-784-8669) for **FREE** smoking cessation help by a trained coach or log on to [www.QuitNowKentucky.org](http://www.QuitNowKentucky.org) to help you quit.

Take control of your tobacco dependence and Quit Now Kentucky.